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Answers to frequently asked questions on the Animas River

How along ago did this incident happen?

The Gold King Mine breach happened north of Silverton on August 5, 2015.

Is the drinking water safe?

The City of Durango wants to remind residents and businesses that if they pay their water bill to the City of Durango, their tap water is safe to drink. City staff turned off and blocked the intakes from the Animas River on August 5 before the plume reached Durango. The pumps will remain off until the Animas is safe. Because the Florida River is now the sole source of drinking water, it is imperative that residents and businesses continue to conserve as much water as possible.

When will the river open?

While the orange color has dissipated, the Animas River remains closed until testing confirms the river water is safe for recreation. It is a day-by-day decision process that takes into account numerous water tests, sediment tests and quality assurance data.

Is the City of Durango closed?

The Animas River is just one aspect of our community. Durango and La Plata County are open with business as usual with plenty of activities. The Animas River is closed to recreational activities; however there are numerous other lakes and rivers for water recreation in the area.

If I still want to raft, fish or boat what are my options?

Vallecito Lake—18 miles from Durango; it is the largest body of water at this elevation or higher in Colorado. Fishing, boating, SUP, kayak, shoreline activities.

<http://www.durango.org/discover-durango/vallecito-lake>

Water recreation and fishing: Electra Lake, Haviland Lake, Little Molas Lake, Andrews Lake, Upper Hermosa Creek, Navajo Reservoir, Cascade Creek, Potato Lake, West Lime Creek, San Juan, Los Pinos River, Lemon Reservoir, Piedra River, La Plata River, Mancos River, Dolores River

Fishing Guides:

Duranglers offers fly-fishing on the Florida River, Dolores, San Juan River. Still lots of waters to guide on. 1-888-FISHDGO, <http://duranglers.com/florida-river-fly-fishing>

San Juan Anglers offers guides for walk in trips, San Juan trips, high country tributaries and lakes. <http://thesanjuanangler.com> , 970-382-9978

Is the river still orange?

No, the images of discolored water circulating in the media are from the first day, almost one week ago. The Animas River remains closed; however, the color has cleared from most the river.

What about the air quality in the area?

This Gold King Mine situation was not an airborne contamination. The air quality in the area is not currently affected by this incident.

What else is there to do?

You may find a complete list of Durango's vacation activities at www.durango.org. As a vacation destination, Durango boasts "A Dozen Vacations in One Destination" due to the wide variety and depth of activities available in the area. From ancient ruins at Mesa Verde National Park and adventures at Purgatory Resort, to art galleries dotting Main Avenue and the historic Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, or jeep trail tours and a day on the water at Vallecito Lake, Durango offers a wide variety of activities for a refreshing and inspiring end of summer vacation.

Additional resources and information:

- La Plata County, <http://www.co.laplata.co.us/emergency> or 970-385-8700
- San Juan Basin Health Department, www.sjbhd.org
- Durango Area Tourism Office, www.durango.org, 1-800-525-8855
- EPA, <http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine>
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/LaPlataCounty and
<https://www.facebook.com/sanjuanbasinhealth>